

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Employment and Training Administration

**Disability Program Navigator Cooperative Agreement with the Social Security
Administration to Enhance Service Delivery for Jobseekers with Disabilities through
the National One-Stop Delivery System. Solicitation for Statewide Cooperative
Agreement Applications**

AGENCY

U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration

ACTION

Announcement of funds and solicitation for statewide cooperative agreement applications.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NO.

SGA/DFA-06-02

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NO.

17.266

SUMMARY

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), Employment and Training Administration (ETA), announces the availability of approximately \$14.4 million in Program Year (PY) 2006 to be granted to eligible states for a two year period following the date of award to establish positions for Disability Program Navigators (DPNs). ETA and the Social Security Administration (SSA) jointly fund, implement, and evaluate this initiative designed to improve the workforce investment system's capacity to service customers with disabilities and employers. This DPN initiative funds states to establish DPN positions to facilitate

universal access in the One-Stop Career Center system for job seekers with disabilities through outreach to the disability community, assuring the availability of trained and expert staff, and enhancing coordination across programs and services. This solicitation's goal is to expand the DPN program to obtain comprehensive national geographic coverage by targeting the remaining states and territories: Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, South Dakota, Utah, Virgin Islands, Washington, and Wyoming.

AUTHORITY

The Disability Program Navigator (DPN) initiative and the Cooperative Agreements resulting from this Solicitation are funded utilizing appropriations for the Work Incentive Grant (WIG) program in the Department of Labor Appropriations Act, 2006, enacted as Title I of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2006 (Pub. L. 109-49). Key provisions relating to delivery of services under this Solicitation for Grant Application (SGA) through the One-Stop delivery system are at Sections 121, 134(c), and 189(c) of the Workforce Investment Act (29 U.S.C. 2841, 2864(c), 2939(c)) and the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49f). Key regulations governing Workforce Investment Act and Wagner-Peyser Act programs are at 20 CFR parts 651-652 and 660-671, and at 29 CFR part 37.

DATE

The closing date for receipt of applications is 5:00 PM ET on November 22, 2006.

ADDRESS

Applications must be sent to James Stockton, Grant Officer, at the following address: U.S. Department of Labor, James Stockton. Reference: Cooperative Agreement SGA/DFA 05-09,

200 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Room N-4673, Washington, DC 20210. Applications may be delivered by hand, U.S. mail, or overnight delivery service. Applications sent by e-mail or telefacsimile (FAX) will not be accepted. Applicants are advised that the Department's receipt of mail has encountered delays because of mail screening procedures at local post offices, and applicants must plan accordingly.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

I. Funding Opportunity Description

The Disability Program Navigator (DPN) initiative was launched in 2002 as a joint effort of DOL's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and the Social Security Administration (SSA). Approximately \$38.5 million in DPN funds has been awarded to 31 states to date. This solicitation will provide funding to additional states to establish new staff positions called Disability Program Navigators (DPN), also referred to as Navigators, in local One-Stop Career Centers under a statewide cooperative agreement grant. The DPN program's primary objective is to increase employment and self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities by enhancing the linkage between employers and state workforce investment boards through One-Stop Career Centers which are administered by ETA. This collaboration among DOL, the state workforce investment boards, and SSA facilitates access to programs and services that will enable the entry or reentry into the workforce of people with disabilities. In addition, the Navigator will ensure that One-Stop Career Center staff possess and demonstrate comprehensive knowledge and skills to assist individuals with disabilities to

“navigate” through available programs and services. Navigators will also work to improve coordination across federal, state, and local programs that impact the employability and career advancement of job seekers with disabilities. The DPN cooperative agreement is designed to provide a state-level focus that includes local level coordination in creating and implementing Navigator positions in local workforce investment areas. Objectives for the DPN state-wide cooperative agreement are consistent with the objectives of the President’s New Freedom Initiative, signed on February 1, 2001, to increase employment opportunities and promote the full participation of people with disabilities in all areas of society.

The Navigator position is summarized in Section I (2) below and the Navigator’s extensive responsibilities are listed in the attached position description (Attachment A). This position description will become part of the cooperative agreement and should guide the implementation of the cooperative agreement. See ETA’s Web site at: www.doleta.gov/disability for a complete list of prior WIGs and current DPN cooperative agreements.

The DPN initiative has demonstrated successful approaches to ensuring that One-Stop Career Center services are fully available and useable to customers with disabilities. ETA anticipates the continuation of this initiative after the cooperative agreement ends, so it is important that states plan to sustain their DPN initiative through other fund sources and resources at the end of this two-year cooperative agreement. Approaches may include sustaining the position through WIA formula funds or developing innovative, coordinated

strategies for serving customers with disabilities which blend resources, thereby maximizing and leveraging all possible funding streams.

1. Background

Individuals with disabilities often face enormous challenges when they seek or obtain employment. Complex rules surrounding entitlement to federal, state, and local government programs designed to assist individuals with disabilities can make the decision to seek employment even more difficult. Fear of losing cash and health benefits is too often the determining factor for individuals with disabilities entering or returning to the world of work and maintaining employment. More than 20 percent of the United States' population has a disability, including approximately 30 million working-age individuals. For those of working age, more than 70 percent of individuals with significant disabilities are not employed. Yet a recent Harris Poll survey indicates that two out of three unemployed individuals with disabilities would prefer to be working and would be able to work if a suitable job were available in their area (Refer to the 2004 National Organization on Disability (N.O.D.) /Harris Survey of Americans with Disabilities, issued June 24, 2004).

Under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, ETA has directed funds and resources to improve workforce services for individuals with disabilities, including those with psychiatric and other non-visible disabilities. This has primarily occurred through the Work Incentive Grant (WIG) program, with over \$65 million in 113 grant awards to state and local workforce systems to improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities through enhanced One-Stop Career Center services. There have been four rounds of two-

year grants since October 2000. In addition to procuring assistive technology, conducting accessibility reviews, ensuring training of One-Stop Career Center staff, and developing resource guides and other tools to assist in the employment of individuals with disabilities, a number of grantees identified the need to employ a disability resource specialist or “navigator” as a critical component to meet the WIG goals and objectives in state and local workforce areas.

In September 2002, ETA and SSA entered into an Interagency Agreement to jointly fund the new Navigator positions within the One-Stop Career Center system. ETA and SSA renewed the Interagency Agreement on September 30, 2005 with additional support of \$3 million for the DPN initiative. The Navigator position was launched to provide seamless employment services to individuals with disabilities seeking to enter the workforce. Since June 2004, DOL/ETA and SSA have jointly distributed \$24 million to fund approximately 267 Navigators in the following 17 states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Maryland, Mississippi, Massachusetts, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Vermont, and Wisconsin. ETA expanded the DPN initiative in PY 2005 with grant awards totaling \$14.5 million to the following 14 states: Alaska, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

SSA’s involvement with the Navigator initiative is part of its effort to improve employment opportunities and outcomes for persons with disabilities. The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 (Public Law 106-170) provides Social Security

beneficiaries with disabilities more choices for receiving employment services. The Act authorizes SSA to issue “tickets to work” to eligible beneficiaries who may assign their tickets to an Employment Network (EN) of their choice to obtain employment-related services, vocational rehabilitation services, or other services necessary to achieve successful job placement. SSA phased in the Ticket to Work Program gradually, and by January 2004 had implemented the program nationally. See Training and Employment Notice No. 6-02 dated January 6, 2003, at ETA’s Web site: <http://www.doleta.gov/disability>.

The September 30, 2005, *Federal Register* included the SSA’s Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM), which proposed to revise the regulations for the Ticket to Work Program. The NPRM states that the changes are designed to make it more attractive for providers, including One-Stop Career Centers, to become ENs. One of the major reasons for limited EN participation has been challenges with the EN payment rate and process. The NPRM proposed to address this issue by creating greater financial incentives and flexibility for EN participation. The proposed SSA’s NPRM can be found at ETA’s Web site: <http://www.doleta.gov/disability>.

SSA has undertaken a major outreach and education effort to inform beneficiaries with disabilities about the work support programs now available under the Ticket to Work program to help them maximize their employment opportunities and efforts towards self-sufficiency. Moreover, SSA has several demonstration projects that focus on the improvement of employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. SSA considers the One-Stop Career Center system a critical component to achieving these objectives, since the system facilitates job placement for individuals with disabilities by

providing important linkages on an ongoing basis with employers, as well as assisting Social Security beneficiaries and other job seekers, with and without disabilities, with training, employment, job retention, and career advancement assistance.

2. Disability Program Navigator Position

A comprehensive description of responsibilities and requirements for the Navigator position is attached to this document (Attachment A). The scope of responsibilities is broad and extensive, including serving as a resource to the One-Stop Career Centers and working in tandem with case management/One-Stop Career Center staff to provide services to individuals with disabilities who seek information about employment, including Social Security work incentives.

The Navigator may be a full-time position, or responsibilities may be distributed to more than one staff person. However, part-time Navigators must meet the full training requirements.

Navigators will complement, rather than duplicate, the responsibilities and functions of the Community Work Incentives Coordinators (CWICs) established under SSA's Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) program (formerly Benefits Planning, Assistance and Outreach (BPAO) program). The BPAO program was established across the country through cooperative agreements with SSA to provide assistance to SSA beneficiaries on the impact of employment on their benefits. On May 16, 2006, SSA issued a solicitation for Cooperative Agreements to award WIPA projects by September 30, 2006 (Program

Announcement No. SSA-OESP-06-1 [*Federal Register*: May 16, 2006 (Volume 71, Number 94)]). For the full solicitation text see:

<http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20061800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2006/06-4507.htm>. A list of current BPAO specialists in each state who are in place through September is located at www.ssa.gov/work/ServiceProviders/bpaofactsheet.html.

Navigators also complement, rather than duplicate, the responsibilities and functions of the Equal Opportunity (EO) officers that recipients of financial assistance throughout the One-Stop Career Center system are required to appoint under the WIA non-discrimination regulations at 29 CFR 37.23 through 37.28. Navigators are not responsible for ensuring compliance with federal disability non-discrimination laws that apply to various entities within the One-Stop Career Center system; that responsibility lies with the EO Officers. ETA encourages Navigators and EO Officers to work together to maximize the opportunities for individuals with disabilities in the One-Stop Career Center system.

ETA and SSA encourage the involvement of state and local Independent Living Centers (ILCs) in the recruitment and hiring of individuals to serve as Navigators. In most cases, ILCs have developed the expertise on disability programs and work incentives outlined in the Navigator position description. Applicants are also encouraged to involve Vocational Rehabilitation agencies and community disability service provider organizations in recruiting and hiring qualified individuals with disabilities to serve as Navigators.

Funds are available for the states identified in Section III (1) of this SGA provided that they submit an application that meets all the requirements set forth in Part IV of this Solicitation. Please note that the States will not be competing against each other for these funds.

II. Award Information

1. Type of Assistance Instrument

The instrument is a two-year cooperative agreement. For this cooperative agreement, ETA and SSA anticipate substantial involvement in assisting awardees with the training of DPNs, communicating effective practices, and sharing information with DPNs through the state lead DPN, and evaluating the overall value of this initiative.

2. Amount of Funds to be Awarded

Approximately \$14.4 million in PY 2006 funds is available to eligible states for two years from the date of award.

3. Anticipated Number of Awards

Up to 21 cooperative agreements may be awarded under this solicitation to eligible states or territories.

4. Expected Amounts of Individual Awards

ETA anticipates awarding cooperative agreements for a two-year period, ranging from \$300,000 to \$1,200,000, depending upon the number of Navigators to be funded, size of the

state applying for the cooperative agreement award, and the state's population. (See Section IV, 3 for applicable budget restrictions.)

5. Anticipated Start Date and Period of Performance for Awards

ETA anticipates making awards by January 2007, and to provide funds for the DPN cooperative agreements under this solicitation for a two year period from the date of award.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants

The goal of this cooperative agreement solicitation is to expand the DPN program to obtain comprehensive national geographic coverage by targeting the remaining states and territories as eligible applicants under this solicitation: Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, South Dakota, Utah, Virgin Islands, Washington, and Wyoming. These funds are available for the specified states provided that they submit a proposal which meets the requirements set forth in Part IV.

These states will not be competing against each other for these funds. Applications for statewide cooperative agreements must come from the state WIA administering entity. Since the DPN initiative is primarily directed toward change and improvement of the One-Stop Career Center system to better serve individuals with disabilities, ETA expects that the state WIA administrative agency will be responsible for implementing this cooperative agreement. States funded under this cooperative agreement must provide the administrative support and

overall management of all Navigators funded under this cooperative agreement, as well as ensures direct/front-line supervision.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing or matching is not a requirement of this funding opportunity.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Forms

This announcement and its attachment contain everything an applicant needs to apply.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

Applicants for this funding opportunity must submit a cover letter and the original plus two copies of the proposal by the time and date specified in Section II (5). The original proposal and the SF 424 must be signed in blue ink by the representative authorized to enter into the cooperative agreement. This application, with the exception of the charts, must be double-spaced, and on single-sided, numbered pages. A font size of at least twelve (12) point font is required throughout. Applications must include two separate parts – Part I – Budget Information, and Part II – Statement of Work - described in further detail below.

3. Contents of Part I – Budget Information

Part I of the application must contain the Standard Form (SF) 424, “Application for Federal Assistance,” (Attachment B) and a fully completed SF 424A - Budget Information

(Attachment C), including a comprehensive budget narrative, with the SF 424 line items.

Additional copies of the SF 424 and SF 424A are available on-line at:

http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/grants_forms.html. The SF 424 must clearly identify the applicant (i.e., the fiscal agent) and contain the original signature of a representative authorized by the governing body of the applicant to enter into the cooperative agreement. A contact person must also be included on the SF-424 with their phone and e-mail address noted.

Effective October 12, 2003, all applicants for federal grant and funding opportunities are required to have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number. Refer to OMB Notice of Final Policy Issuance, 68 FR 38402 (June 27, 2003). Applicants must supply their DUNS number in item #5 of the new SF-424 issued by OMB (Rev. 9-2003).

The Budget Information Form must incorporate financial narrative information that describes all costs associated with implementing the activities to be covered with the cooperative agreement funds covering the two years of the proposed cooperative agreement award period. The budget narrative must delineate in detail the budget associated with year one, year two, and total projected budget.

In order to maximize the number of Navigator positions that will be established under this cooperative agreement program, funds awarded must be used principally to support wages and fringe benefits of individuals designated to perform the role of the Navigator. Current DPN states note that salaries and fringe benefits need to be competitive to avoid turnover or

loss of experienced Navigators (average salaries and fringe of current states is approximately \$58,000 which varies depending upon the economic environment in the local area). The budget should anticipate the travel needs for Navigators to attend one national training conference and other training and coordination activities planned by the state involving in-state travel. The following restrictions apply to the budget request:

- The cost per Navigator cannot exceed \$110,000 (i.e., the total award request divided by the number of Navigators planned);
- States that have not previously received a WIG may include up to 15% of their funding request to meet disability-related accessibility compliance;
- Other administrative costs at the state level, including indirect costs, cannot exceed 10% of the award.

4. Contents of Part II – Statement of Work

Part II, the Statement of Work, including the three required charts, should not exceed fifteen (15) double-spaced pages.

A. Identify Both the Administering Agency at the State Level and the Project

Director. As discussed in Section III (1), ETA requires the state WIA administrative agency will be both the fiscal and administrative entity. In view of the goals of this cooperative agreement solicitation, as well of the legal requirements related to serving individuals with disabilities in integrated settings, DOL will not fund proposals that subcontract the majority of administration and management to other organizational entities such as state mental health or Vocational Rehabilitation agencies.

- B. **Describe the Proposed Implementation Process, Including the Plan for Hiring and Supervising the Navigators.** Applicants must identify the process they will use to implement the proposed Navigator program, such as whether a state will establish competitive sub-grants to local workforce investment areas. This description should also include how many Navigators will be hired, and who will hire them (i.e., the employing entity). To date, states have implemented the Navigator positions in several ways, including establishing Navigator positions as employees of the state, of One-Stop Career Center operators, or of local entities such as the ILC. States and local workforce areas that have hired DPNs under a WIG are encouraged to consider these WIG Navigators in their hiring plans to retain their acquired skills and expertise on disability and workforce issues.
- C. **Provide a Comprehensive Action Plan.** The Comprehensive Action Plan must address: 1) the status of accessibility requirements in the One-Stop Career Center system and plans to address deficiencies; 2) current and future coordination plans regarding the multiple programs, systems, and services that impact the employability, employment, and career advancement of adults and youth with disabilities; and 3) outreach and coordination with the employer community designed to improve employment opportunities for job seekers with disabilities.
- (1) **Identify Status of Compliance of One-Stop Career Centers with Applicable Accessibility and Nondiscrimination Requirements.** The plan must address compliance with specific legal requirements related to architectural and programmatic accessibility of One-Stop Career Centers, provision of equally-effective communication for and with individuals with disabilities, provision of reasonable

accommodations, and modifications, and general nondiscrimination and equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities. Applicants must confirm that all One-Stop Career Centers in the state comply fully with the applicable requirements related to architectural accessibility, as set forth at 29 CFR 32.26 through 32.28. The Statement of Work must include how the accessibility assessment has been determined and what actions have been taken to ensure accessibility of the One-Stop Career Center system. If all One-Stop Career Centers do not comply fully with the applicable accessibility requirements, applicants should identify any outstanding accessibility issues of non-compliance in the state, including: (a) plans for corrective action, such as addressing communication elements and features; (b) a timeline by which the corrective action will occur; and (c) the approximate level of funds that are required for completion. The timeline for completion must not exceed six months following the award. States that have not previously received a WIG may include up to 15% of their budget request to address disability-related needs (e.g., to purchase of assistive technology) in the state.

(2) Identify Current and Future Coordination Plans. As part of the Comprehensive Plan, identify achievements that have occurred to date regarding coordination with disability-related entities, including:

- state and local Vocational Rehabilitation agencies;
- state mental health and developmental disability agencies;
- educational transition programs;
- veterans agencies and the Department of Veterans Administration;
- criminal justice and prisoner re-entry initiatives;

- homelessness programs;
- substance abuse programs;
- Medicaid and Medicare (including coordination on Medicaid Buy-In provisions and Medicaid Infrastructure Grants);
- SSA (including ENs under the Ticket to Work Program and BPAO Specialists);
- state ILC and local ILCs;
- housing and transportation agencies;
- Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA)/Community Mental Health Services Administration's (CMHSA) Transformation Grants, Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) program;
- self-employment/micro-enterprise/entrepreneurial programs;
- faith-based and community-based organizations providing services; and
- supports to individuals with disabilities, and other initiatives.

Also, identify plans to initiate, continue, or expand such coordination under this cooperative agreement and the role the Navigator(s) will play in this regard. In addition, identify EO Officers within the state and explain how the DPN initiative will coordinate with, and not duplicate or supplant, their activities in ensuring compliance with applicable disability nondiscrimination laws. Finally, identify current ODEP grantees within the state, where such grantees exist, and clarify how the DPN initiative will coordinate with, and not duplicate or supplant, their grant activities.

(3) Identify Current and Future Outreach and Coordination with the Employer Community.

A major objective of the DPN initiative is to increase opportunities for employment for individuals with disabilities, including beneficiaries of SSA disability benefit programs. In the Comprehensive Plan, identify what actions the state and local workforce areas have taken to address employer needs such as linkages with DOL's Business Partners and One-Stop Career Centers' Business Teams, including plans to facilitate successful employment and workforce participation of individuals with disabilities. Also, identify the applicant's plans to collaborate with the business sector and the role the Navigator will play in facilitating linkages to employers for job seekers with disabilities, either individually or through the local workforce area's business or employer relations representative(s). Specifically describe how the applicant will ensure that the disability status of individual jobseekers will not be disclosed to employers, unless the applicable legal requirements have been met.

- D. **Identify a Plan for Sustainability.** Applicants must identify, with specificity, how they will sustain the DPN initiative after the period of grant funding ends. Various strategies for sustainability include, but are not limited to, the blending and braiding of federal, state, and local public and private resources to maximize and leverage funding, as follows: 1) using WIA state funds to pay for the DPNs; 2) becoming an Employment Network; 3) using Medicaid Buy-In (MBI), Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG) funds, or other CMS funds; 4) using Mental Health funds (e.g., SAMHSA's Transformation Grants); 5) using Vocational Rehabilitation funds; 6) working with employers to access tax incentives in Community Enterprise and Empowerment Zones; 7) accessing DOT mobility management and coordination funds; 8) using Individual

Development Accounts (IDAs); 9) developing and implementing Inter-Agency Services Agreements (ISAs) with mandated and non-mandated partners; and 10) using other state or local private and public funding.

E. **Identify Methods of Collecting Quantitative Data on the Number**

of People with Disabilities Served. The applicant should specifically identify the methods it uses to comply with the data collection requirements under 29 CFR part 37 and consistent with Workforce Investment Act Standardized Record Data (WIASRD) and ETA 9002 Wagner-Peyser submission requirements. The state should also identify if it has implemented, or plans to implement: 1) SSI and/or SSDI beneficiary status as part of state or local record keeping for WIA adult, dislocated worker, and youth services; 2) identification and record keeping of public programs or services such as those listed above under “coordination plans”; and 3) customer satisfaction or “mystery-shopper” protocols to evaluate customer satisfaction for job seekers at the One-Stop, including job seekers with disabilities. Data should be collected in accordance with requirements specified in Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 17-05 on the new common measures. Please note that customers must be asked to provide four items of demographic information, including disability status, at the point when they are asked to provide personal information. Although applicants must be asked to provide this demographic information, they are not required to provide it and they must be informed that providing this information is voluntary (see 29 CFR Part 32). Some individuals with disabilities, especially people with non-visible disabilities, may be reluctant to self-identify. Therefore, the applicant should incorporate a process to inform job seekers of the potential benefits and services available to customers who do

have a disability.

F. **Identify Goals for Increasing the Employment and Employability of Job**

Seekers with Disabilities. Identify the service and outcome goals the applicant plans to achieve through this cooperative agreement and the deployment of Navigators in local workforce investment area(s). In the table on the next page provide the WIA Title I (Workforce Investment Act Standardized Record Data) and Wagner-Peyser data for Program Years 2004 and PY 2005 projections and 2006 related to numbers and percentages of exiters entered employment, retention, and wage gains for all exiters and exiters with disabilities. Refer to TEGL No. 17-05, February 17, 2006, for further information regarding the definition or calculation for the defined categories.

Actual and Planned Service and Outcome Goals						
State:						
	WIASRD (WIA standard record data)			Wagner-Peyser (ETA 9002 reports)		
	PY 2004	PY 2005	PY 2006	PY 2004	PY 2005	PY 2006
All Exiters						
No. of Exiters with Disabilities						
% of Exiters with Disabilities						
% Rate of Entered Employment (All Exiters)						
Number of Entered Employment with Disabilities						
% Rate of Entered Employment with Disabilities						
% Rate of Exiters Retaining Employment						
Number of People with Disabilities Retaining Employment						
% Rate of People with Disabilities Retaining Employment						
Average Earnings- All Exiters						
Average Earnings- People with Disabilities						

It is necessary for each applicant that receives grant funds to meet performance targets that are consistent with the Department's GPRA Goals for this initiative.

Refer to the chart below for the DPN initiative's established performance targets in PYs 2005-2008 for states entering a DPN cooperative agreement. Baselines have been established for the DPN states based on PY 2003 data. The baseline also takes

into account outcomes for all exiters of the WIA adult, dislocated worker, and older youth programs. The measures establish ambitious increases or decreases in goal levels. Please note that TEGL 17-05 establishes an “average wage” common measure which replaces the “wage gain” measure. A baseline goal will be established using PY 2005 data.

GPRA Goals for DPN Initiative:

Annual Outcome: Exiters with disabilities in the workforce areas receiving a DPN cooperative agreement.

YEAR	TARGET	ACTUAL
2003	6.0%	6.0%
2004	6.1%	4.8%
2005	6.2%	TBD
2006	6.3%	TBD
2007	6.4%	TBD

Annual Outcome: Entered Employment Rate for people with disabilities in the workforce areas receiving a DPN cooperative agreement.

YEAR	TARGET	ACTUAL
2003	64%	59%
2004	65%	70.3%
2005	66%	TBD
2006	67%	TBD
2007	68%	TBD

Annual Outcome: Employment Retention Rate for people with disabilities in the workforce areas receiving a DPN cooperative agreement.

YEAR	TARGET	ACTUAL
2003	79%	80%
2004	80%	82.1%
2005	81%	TBD
2006	82%	TBD
2007	83%	TBD

Annual Outcome: Average Earnings for people with disabilities in the workforce areas receiving a DPN cooperative agreement.

YEAR	TARGET	ACTUAL
2003	\$1,772 (wage gain)	\$1,772 (wage gain)
2004	\$1,822 (wage gain)	\$2,133 (wage gain)
2005	A baseline goal for average wage will be established in PY 2005	
2006		
2007		

G. **Identify any Funds Outstanding from Current or Prior Work Incentive Grants**

with ETA. Each applicant must provide the status of funds for Work Incentive Grants previously awarded.

H. **Identify the Following Information by Completing the Chart on Page 29:**

- The population of the state, including the date and source of the data;
- The number of workforce investment areas and number of comprehensive One-Stop Career Centers in the states;
- The number and identification of any existing staff positions that are similar to the Navigators that are being funded through a Customized Employment Grant, SSA Partnership Grant, or other grant, and how these will be linked with the DPN initiative in the state;
- The name of the workforce investment area (include identification number if applicable, as well as One-Stop Career Centers that host Navigator positions;
- Identify the employing and/or supervising entity for each Navigator position, the planned number of Navigators in each area, and the related annual planned wages and fringe benefits.

Name of State:				
Population (give source and date):				
Current State Profile for Service to Individuals with Disabilities				
Workforce Investment Areas in State	Number of Full-Service One-Stop Career Centers in State	Navigator-Type Positions in Place Under Other Grants	<i>Note:</i> The Center data should be drawn from State entries in America's Service Locator (www.servicelocator.org)	
Planned Levels under Cooperative Agreement				
Identify Workforce Investment Area for Navigator Positions	Specify Employing and Supervising Entity of DPN(s)	Planned Number of Navigators	Planned Wages and Benefits	
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
Total Navigator Positions to be Established under Agreement				
Average Planned Wages and Benefits				

I. **Timeline for Implementation of Navigator Staffing and Other Activities:**

Submissions must include a timeline for implementation of the cooperative agreement as provided below. Please note that Navigators are to be hired within 90 days of execution of the cooperative agreement. Funds authorized for Navigator positions that remain unfilled after 90 days may be redistributed to other awardees.

Consequently, it is important to identify any potential barriers to hiring Navigators within this timeframe. Technical assistance and peer support from other states that have experience in hiring Navigators will be available to assist states. Identify the implementation timeline for any assistive technology that is proposed as part of your application.

Name of State:			
Timeline for Grant Implementation			
Enter Month / Year		Major Tasks Undertaken	Major Tasks Completed
1			
2			
3			
4			

5. Intergovernmental Review.

This funding opportunity is not subject to Executive Order (EO) 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.”

6. Funding Restrictions.

All proposed costs must be necessary and reasonable according to the federal guidelines set forth in the “Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements

to State and Local Governments,” codified at 29 CFR part 97, and must comply with the applicable OMB cost principles circulars, as identified in 29 CFR 97.22 (b).

V. Application Review Information

1. Criteria.

In evaluating applications, ETA and SSA will consider the following factors:

- A. Responsiveness to the requirements of this announcement, including the timeliness and provision of all requested information;
- B. Commitment by the state and local WIA administering system to timely and effective implementation of their DPN initiative;
- C. Development and implementation of a Comprehensive Action Plan;
- D. Documentation, with specificity, of a sustainability plan to continue the DPN initiative after the period of grant funding ends;
- E. Commitment to achieving GPRA Goals, and the identification of other outcomes, such as the number of customers with disabilities who no longer are receiving SSI or SSDI benefits; and
- F. Progress under prior WIGs, if applicable, in addressing statewide disability infrastructure needs such as assistive technology and coordination issues. ETA anticipates that the progress of eligible applicants in these areas is such that the majority of requested funding will be focused on implementing Navigator positions in local One-Stop Career Centers.

2. Review and Selection Process.

A panel of ETA and SSA officials will review and assess the applications against the requirements of Section IV (2) and the criteria of Section V (1) and make recommendations regarding selections and funding amounts to the Grant Officer. Applicants must meet the requirements of the solicitation to receive funding. Funding levels will vary depending on need and the size of the state. Applicants will not be competing against each other for these funds. Panel recommendations are advisory to, and not binding, on the Grant Officer. ETA and SSA may elect to award cooperative agreements either with or without discussions and negotiations with the applicant. In situations without discussions, an award will be based on the Grant Officer's signature on the SF 424, which constitutes a binding offer.

3. Anticipated Announcement and Award Date.

ETA anticipates awarding the DPN cooperative agreements by January, 2007.

4. Webinar.

A Webinar on this solicitation and the DPN Initiative will be scheduled on a date to be announced. The purpose of this Webinar will be to discuss the: purpose of the SGA; DPN Initiative; Eligible Applicants; Funding/Funding Requirements; Proposal Requirements; Reporting Requirements; Evaluation; and Questions.

VI. Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices.

The notice of award, signed by the Grant Officer, will be sent by overnight delivery.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.

States awarded funds under this cooperative agreement solicitation must comply with all provisions of this solicitation, including the following administrative requirements which apply to all cooperative agreements awarded under this solicitation:

- Awardees must identify a lead DPN (i.e., project lead) for coordination of the DPN project who will serve as the primary contact for the cooperative agreement. This individual should report to, and be a representative of, the state WIA administering agency. The lead DPN would also take an approach of being a disability employment systems broker to work with the state workforce investment board, the Governor's Office, and other statewide entities that impact the successful employment of people with disabilities. The Lead Navigator must be available to work with ETA, SSA, and the University of Iowa's Law, Health Policy and Disability Center (LHPDC), which has been contracted to provide training, technical assistance, and evaluation of the DPN initiative.
- Individuals must be hired or designated to fulfill the Navigator role within 90 days of execution of the cooperative agreement.
- All Navigators will be required to attend a national or regional training conference with specialized training developed by ETA, SSA, and LHPDC to assure the relevant skills and knowledge requirements are met. Navigators hired under this cooperative agreement will actively participate in technical assistance, training,

conference calls, and working groups (as applicable) chaired by ETA, SSA, or LHPDC throughout the period of performance of the cooperative agreement.

- Local workforce investment areas that are selected to host a Navigator must have a One-Stop Career Center(s) that meets all the following legal requirements:
 - Comply fully with all applicable legal requirements related to architectural and programmatic accessibility for persons with disabilities, as set forth in 29 CFR 32.26 through 32.28;
 - Take all necessary steps to ensure that communications with individuals with disabilities are as effective as communications with others, including furnishing appropriate auxiliary aids and services, and giving primary consideration to the requests of each individual with a disability, as set forth in 29 CFR 37.9;
 - Provide reasonable accommodations and reasonable modifications for qualified individuals with disabilities as set forth in 29 CFR 37.8; and
 - Ensure nondiscrimination and equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities, including compliance with any additional legal requirements that apply to each One-Stop Career Center.
- Local workforce investment areas are strongly encouraged to involve a Disability Advisory/Advocacy/Access Committee, by establishing a new one, or using an existing one, comprised of public and private agencies, as well as consumers with disabilities, as part of their coordination and implementation of the DPN initiative.
- Applicants are strongly encouraged to establish, or use an existing, state level cross-agency workforce and disability advisory committee that works in conjunction with the lead DPN. Activities should include additional training for the Navigators

focused on state and local resources, policies, and issues which are specific to the state and impact the ability of job seekers with disabilities to enter or reenter the world of work.

- Applicants must demonstrate that they understand that a Navigator is:
 - Not a case manager
 - Not a front-line staff person in a One-Stop Career Center
 - Not a Community Work Incentive Coordinator (formerly BPAO specialist)
 - Not an Equal Opportunity Officer
 - Not a Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist
- Applicants must demonstrate that they understand that a Navigator is a:
 - Resource to the One-Stop Career Center staff
 - Facilitator
 - Problem solver
 - Systems change agent (individually and systemically)
 - Relationship builder
 - Team builder
- Applicants must demonstrate an understanding that an important role of the Navigator is to facilitate the formation of *local disability teams* at the One-Stop Career Center to assist customers with significant disabilities in addressing the often complex and multiple barriers that impact their entry or re-entry into the world of work. Teams operate both internally and externally to the workforce system and facilitate an integrated, blended approach which leverages and coordinates resources from a

variety of systems to result in a quality employment outcome for customers with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities

- Additionally, all cooperative agreement awardees must comply with the following administrative standards and national policy provisions, as applicable:
 - 29 CFR part 2, subpart D – Equal Treatment in Department of Labor Programs for Religious Organizations; Protection of Religious Liberty of Department of Labor Social Service Providers and Beneficiaries;
 - 29 CFR part 30 – Equal Employment Opportunity in Apprenticeship and Training;
 - 29 CFR part 31 – Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs of the Department of Labor – Effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964;
 - 29 CFR part 32 – Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap in Programs and Activities Receiving or Benefiting from Federal Financial Assistance;
 - 29 CFR part 33 – Enforcement of Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap in Programs or Activities Conducted by the Department of Labor;
 - 29 CFR part 35 – Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Age in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance from the Department of Labor;
 - 29 CFR part 36 - Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance;

- 29 CFR part 37 – Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA);
- 29 CFR part 93 – Lobbying;
- 29 CFR part 96 – Audit Requirements for Grants, Contracts and Other Agreements;
- 29 CFR part 97 – Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments;
- 29 CFR part 98 – Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-Procurement) and Government-wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace; and
- 29 CFR part 99 – Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations.

3. Funding Restrictions.

Except as specifically provided, a DOL/ETA award of federal funds under a cooperative agreement to sponsor any program(s) does not provide a waiver of any grant requirement and/or procedures. For example, the OMB circulars require that an entity's procurement procedures must require that all procurement transactions be conducted, as practical, to provide open and free competition. If a proposal identifies a specific entity to provide the services, the DOL/ETA's award does not provide the justification or basis to sole-source the procurement, i.e., avoid competition.

4. Reporting.

Awardees will be required to submit the SF 269 Financial Status Report on-line on a quarterly basis. Additional data or narrative reports may be required. In addition, ETA will continue to evaluate the DPN program consistent with the evaluation process for the first 17 DPN States. This will include a qualitative evaluation of the DPN program. Submission of Workforce Investment Act Standard Record Data (WIASRD) and Employment Service data related to services and outcomes for customers with disabilities may also be required. The evaluation is necessary to inform discussion of the impact of the DPN Program within One-Stop Career Centers in achieving successful outcomes, including employment that leads to self-sufficiency. Costs incurred by the awardee related to reporting and data collection requirements for evaluation purposes may be included in the proposed cooperative agreement budget.

Awardees must provide to the Department of Labor semi-annual data for the workforce investment areas served by the DPN program that includes Wagner-Peyser and WIA Title I data on individuals with disabilities who are participants, enter employment, are retained in employment, and the average earnings compared to the same data for those individuals without disabilities.

Collection of the Social Security number for each WIA Title I customer with a disability is necessary for evaluation purposes. If the Social Security number is not collected at the point of registration in the One-Stop Career Center system, applicants for this cooperative agreement should indicate this and must make additional provisions for this information to be collected, consistent with requirements that will be in place under the common

performance measures. A customer's unwillingness to provide his/her Social Security number must not affect his/her receipt of services.

VII. Agency Contacts

Programmatic questions should be emailed to Alexandra Kielty, Program Manager at Kielty.Alexandra@dol.gov.

Administrative questions should be faxed to Mamie Williams, Grant Officer, Division of Federal Assistance, fax number (202) 693-2879 (this is not a toll-free number). Please identify the cooperative agreement funding opportunity as well as a contact name, phone number, fax number, and e-mail address.

Signed in Washington, DC, this _____ of _____, 2006

James W. Stockton

Grant Officer

Employment and Training Administration

ATTACHMENTS

A. Disability Program Navigator Description

B. SF 424 - Application Form

C. SF 424A - Budget Information Form

POSITION DESCRIPTION FOR THE DISABILITY PROGRAM NAVIGATOR

BACKGROUND

The Disability Program Navigator (Navigator) is the focus of a demonstration project jointly sponsored by the Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration (DOL/ETA) and the Social Security Administration, Office of Program Development and Research (SSA/OPDR). The DOL and SSA are jointly funding and training individuals selected as Navigators and will evaluate the Navigator positions.

The Navigator will address the needs of individuals with disabilities seeking training and employment opportunities through the One-Stop Career Center system established under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998. The Navigator will provide expertise and serve as a resource person to the workforce investment system and individuals with disabilities, including Social Security Disability Insurance (DI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) disability and blindness beneficiaries. Navigators will have expertise regarding the One-Stop partner programs, services, and information and SSA work incentives and other employment support programs, including the Ticket to Work programs and SSA demonstration projects focused on improving employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

The Navigator will expand consumer choice in addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities seeking training and employment opportunities through the One-Stop Career Center system established under WIA. The Navigator position is intended to increase employment and self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities by linking them to employers and by facilitating access to supports and services that will provide transition to employment.

DUTIES

The Navigator serves as an expert on workforce development issues and policies impacting individuals with disabilities who are seeking employment, skill development, job retention assistance, or career advancement through the One-Stop Career Center system (including access to WIA training which is typically underutilized for individuals with disabilities). The Navigator develops linkages and collaborates on an ongoing basis with employers either individually or through their business relations team (as applicable in the state or local area) to facilitate job placements for individuals with disabilities and serves as a resource on SSA's work incentive and employment support programs. The Navigator also serves as a resource to the workforce investment community within their service area to ensure the availability of comprehensive knowledge on federal, state, local, and private programs that impact the ability of individuals with disabilities to enter and remain in the workforce.

Using a “consumer choice” model, the Navigator will, as necessary, work in tandem with case management/One Stop staff to provide services to individuals with disabilities, including SSI and DI beneficiaries. When working with youth, the Navigator will be available and prepared to work in tandem with case management/One-Stop staff to assist these customers in accessing the individualized supports (including Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandated special education and related services) needed to successfully transition to adulthood.

Recommended Core Functions of the Navigator Position

- Develops linkages and collaborates individually or through the local workforce area’s business or employer relations representatives, as applicable, on an ongoing basis with employers and employer organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Business Leadership Network, to promote the hiring of individuals with disabilities and to facilitate their job placement, while complying fully with the legal requirements related to confidentiality.
- Serves as a resource to the workforce investment staff within the service area to ensure the availability of comprehensive knowledge on federal, state, local and private programs that impact the ability of individuals with disabilities to enter and remain in the workforce.
- Trains One-Stop Career Center staff and other staff on activities, services, and resources available.

- Serves as a One-Stop Career Center resource on Social Security work incentives and other employment support programs, including the Ticket to Work Program, and serves as a liaison to the Community Work Incentive Coordinators (CWICs) (formerly Benefits Planning, Assistance and Outreach (BPAOs) specialists), the Protection and Advocacy systems (P&As), SSA's employment-related demonstration projects, and state vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies.
- Trains or makes training available to One-Stop Career Center staff on: disability issues; facility, communication and program accessibility requirements; the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); implementing regulations at 29 CFR Part 32 of the Section 504 implementing regulations of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act and WIA Section 188 (implementing regulations at 29 CFR (Part 37) definitions and requirements; assessment tools and their applicability; SSA employment support programs; employer federal and state tax incentives; and other relevant information that may be applicable.
- Establishes an advisory working group(s) on One-Stop system accessibility issues, including a procedures for ongoing review, recommendations or action plans, that include individuals with disabilities and others with expertise on accessibility and services to individuals with disabilities.
- Facilitates implementation of Individual Development Accounts or cross-program teams (e.g., One-Stop staff, VR counselor, Medicaid staff, Housing, or Mental Health agency staff) when appropriate to assist job seekers with disabilities in a comprehensive manner addressing multiple funding streams or barriers.

- Helps link the case manager to information on how to access a wide variety of programs available to support the individual with disability's successful entry or re-entry into the workforce, how to facilitate the connection to programs and the benefits, services, and/or supports that they provide in the most integrated settings appropriate to the needs of the individual with a disability, and supports follow-up activities which confirm that each individual is receiving the level of benefits, services, and/or supports needed.
- Facilitates the transition of in- or out-of-school youth with disabilities to secure employment and economic self-sufficiency, including outreach to schools and the design and coordination of customized assistance.
- Conducts outreach to, and coordinates with, community service providers working with individuals with disabilities, local Independent Living Centers, and public and private mental health and developmental disability organizations. Fosters linkages between these organizations and programs, operating through One-Stop Career Centers, including Social Security employment support programs.
- Serves as a One-Stop Career Center resource on pertinent workforce development issues and policies for jobseekers with disabilities who seek employment, skill development, job retention assistance, or career advancement through the One-Stop Career Center system (including the use of Individual Training Accounts).
- Provides an ongoing assessment to the Lead Navigator of this cooperative agreement regarding One-Stop Career Center facilities, services, programs and equipment to ensure these are accessible to people with disabilities, including ensuring that informational materials on the Ticket to Work Program, the Plan to

Achieve Self Support (PASS), and other programs are available in alternate formats.

- Works with designated Equal Employment Opportunity officer(s), the local workforce investment board and the One-Stop operator to ensure that One-Stop Career Center facilities, services, programs, and equipment are accessible to individuals with disabilities, including ensuring the availability of publications and materials in alternate formats.
- Provides information on assistive technologies and/or referral to organizations that can serve as a resource (e.g., State Services for the Blind offices, regional Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers, Job Accommodation Networks, etc.).
- In collaboration with the EO Officer, provides information on complaint procedures established under the nondiscrimination provisions of WIA Section 188 as well as those provided in SSA's Ticket to Work Program (i.e., P&As).
- Facilitates the collection of participant data that may be required to effectively evaluate the DPN initiative.

RELEVANT KNOWLEDGE

The Navigator will be trained on a broad range of federal, state, local, and private work incentives and other employment support programs and services, including One-Stop partner programs and SSA work incentives and related employment support programs, including the Ticket to Work Program. The Navigator will be expected to acquire knowledge in the following areas of sufficient depth and detail to effectively impart program and service

information to One-Stop customers and staff and to successfully facilitate the provision of services for and to improve job opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

- Title XVI of the Social Security Act, including the Plan to Achieve Self Support provision and other work incentives as well as Title II of the Social Security Act, with particular attention to work incentives.
- Title XVIII and Title XIX of the Social Security Act, with particular attention to state "buy-in" options with regard to Medicaid.
- The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999.
- The Workforce Investment Act, with particular attention to the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs, and the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity requirements of Section 188 and its implementing regulations.
- Other legal requirements related to disability, including those of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and their implementing regulations.
- The goals, policies, and operations of the state and local workforce investment systems and the partner agencies and their programs.
- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and State Title V (Maternal and Child Health) Agency programs.
- Vocational rehabilitation agency services provided through the state Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agency.
- Functional assessment tools available through VR, adult literacy programs, and other partner programs in the One-Stop Career Center system.
- Local transportation resources and the availability of alternative transportation modes.

- Housing availability, programs and limitations.
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and welfare-to-work requirements affecting TANF recipients.
- The array of available assistive technologies and resources, including an awareness of local, state, regional, and national resources related to assistive technology.
- Basic office computer skills (word processing, presentation, and database programs).
- The ability to communicate orally and in writing.